



## **Savannah River Site Office**

### **NEWS MEDIA CONTACTS:**

Bryan Wilkes, NNSA  
(202) 586-7371  
James Giusti, DOE-SR  
(803) 952-7697

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **NNSA Breaks Ground On MOX Facility**

Site Preparation Begins at Savannah River Site

Aiken, S.C. – The National Nuclear Security Administration's (NNSA) plutonium disposition program today moved another step forward with the start of site preparation for its Mixed Oxide (MOX) Fuel Fabrication Facility at the Savannah River Site. NNSA Administrator Linton F. Brooks and U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham led a group of U.S. and Russian dignitaries in turning the first shovels of earth at the MOX facility site at SRS, located in F-Area.

“Starting site preparation in advance of construction for the MOX facility will bring us one step closer to disposing of large quantities of weapon-grade plutonium in the United States and Russia,” said Brooks. “The MOX facility will create hundreds of new jobs at SRS and will provide a pathway out of South Carolina for plutonium brought here for disposition.”

“The congressional delegation and the Bush administration are committed to ensuring the MOX program becomes a reality. Today is another important step in the right direction,” said Graham. “The MOX program is vital to our national security and we will continue to work together to ensure it is adequately funded. The citizens of South Carolina, along with the Savannah River Site workforce, should be proud of the role we are playing in making the world a safer place.”

U.S. Senator Jim DeMint, U.S. Representative Gresham Barrett and U.S. Representative Charlie Norwood also attended the ceremony and delivered remarks.

NNSA's plutonium disposition program aims to eliminate a total of 68 metric tons of surplus weapon-grade plutonium both in the United States and in Russia, and is based on a 2000 nonproliferation agreement between the two countries. Both countries will dispose of their plutonium by converting it to MOX fuel for use in existing nuclear reactors. Once the MOX fuel has been irradiated, the plutonium can no longer be readily used for nuclear weapons.

Established by Congress in 2000, NNSA is a semi-autonomous agency within the U.S. Department of Energy responsible for maintaining and enhancing the safety, security, reliability and performance of the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile without nuclear testing; working to reduce global danger from weapons of mass destruction; providing the U.S. Navy with safe and effective nuclear propulsion; and responding to nuclear and radiological emergencies in the U.S. and aboard.

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